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THE

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THE GENESIS OF THE CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

III. PSYCHOLOGICAL.

CRITICAL philosophy then, in Kant's own case at least, is the result of the sceptical or dialectical method. Of course, Kant's philosophical status at the time he began to practise this method seriously was also an essential condition. It was, as we have seen, that of a man drifting moodily and defiantly into the shoals and quicksands of empiricism with eyes turned longingly to the haven of rationalism toward which a strong permanent under-current tended to draw him. Scarcely had he given to the world his most sceptical works than he wrote for his own eye alone: "I still thought I should find the method of enlarging dogmatical knowledge through pure reason."[1] The next development of his thought, whatever it may be, must take up and reconcile these contradictory moments of rationalism and empiricism. But that is quite consistent with the contention that it was brought about by his insight into, and endeavor to overcome, the dialectic of reason. "Reason bases an assertion upon a universally acknowledged principle, and from another principle just as certain she proves by unimpeachable demonstration the opposite of that assertion." This astonishing phenomenon was the moving impulse to Kant's further development. He regarded it as a "decisive experiment which could not fail to bring

[1] *Reflexionen*, no. 3, *op. cit.* II, 4.

to light the error that lay concealed in the assumptions of reason."[1] To discover that error was the ultimate purpose of the 'sceptical method,' which is totally different from scepticism. The latter undermines the foundation of all knowledge, in order, if possible, to leave nothing trustworthy and certain anywhere. "The sceptical method, on the contrary, aims at certainty, because, while watching a contest which on both sides is carried on honestly and intelligently, it tries to discover the point where the misunderstanding arises, in order to do what is done by wise legislators, namely, to derive from the embarrassments of judges in lawsuits information as to what is imperfectly, or not quite accurately, determined in their laws."[2] What, then, is the inaccuracy, the immanent error, that leads reason into contradiction with itself? Kant had grappled for many years with the embarrassments, the antinomies, that resulted from this error. He noticed, in time, that they all arose in connection with the dogmatic attempt to derive philosophical knowledge from notions and principles, which had long been in possession of reason, without examination into their nature and validity.[3] The third, fourth, and sixth 'Reflections' record the slow dawn of the first glimmerings of light. "It was a long time before I found in this way [*i.e.*, by the sceptical method] the whole dogmatic theory dialectical. But I was in quest of something certain, if not in regard to the object, still in regard to the nature and the limits of this [dogmatic] kind of knowledge. I found by degrees that many of the principles (*Sätze*) which are regarded as objective are in reality subjective, *i.e.*, they contain the conditions under which alone we see into or comprehend the object. . . . Before the inaugural dissertation [1770] I already had the idea of the influence of the subjective conditions of knowledge upon the objective."[4] But this insight is identical with the discovery in 1769 of that "illusion of the understanding" out of which the antinomies sprang. The illusion is the universal and unavoidable assumption (common alike to dogmatists and sceptics) that the objects of our perception are the things-in-themselves, and that the principles of their connection are valid, not only within experience, but of things-in-themselves as well.[1] And Kant's insight is the revolutionary "discovery of the true constitution of things as objects of the senses," as phenomena or appearances to us, not noumena or things-in-themselves. As the supposition that the world of sense was the things-in-themselves engendered the antinomies, which forced him to reconsider his starting-point, so the discovery thus made of the true nature of objects as appearances enabled him to solve the antinomies and vindicate the unity of reason.[2] But Kant does more than allay the contradictions so long agitated by his sceptical method. Not only is the 'everlasting nay' left behind, but the 'everlasting yea' is already in his grasp. For it is in virtue of this discovery of the influence of "the subjective conditions of knowledge" upon the constitution of the object that Kant claims for himself the super-eminent position of a Copernicus in philosophy. And, in fact, the great *Critique*, at least on its constructive side, is simply devoted to the determination of those *a priori* elements which the mind brings into every act of perception, and with which it enwraps objects and turns them into phenomena of its own. The insight, therefore, into the activity of the subject as co-creator of the object, by which the antinomies of reason were solved, is also the beginning of that critical philosophy which marks a Copernican epoch in the history of human thought. Accordingly, it is not too much to say that the antinomies were the occasion or condition of the *Critique of Pure Reason.* "By its own self-contradiction reason was compelled to search for the illusion out of which the contradiction arose and for the means of removing it. This could be done only by a complete critique of the entire faculty of pure reason. Hence the antinomy of pure reason is in fact the most beneficent perplexity (*Verirrung*) into which the human reason could by any possibility have fallen."[3] Without the antinomies there would have been no discovery of the phenomenal character of the object. This doctrine is called 'transcendental idealism' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where it appears as a corollary to the 'transcendental æsthetic' and the presupposition of the 'transcendental logic.' But Kant's first proof was the indirect one, by means of the antinomies. And to this he sometimes reverts even after the publication of the *Critique*. Thus, in the pamphlet against Eberhard, he says: "This doctrine [transcendental idealism] can be proved independently of the deduction of space and time, whose ideality is thus established before being inferred from their own inner constitution."[1] That is to say, transcendental idealism, instead of being inferred as a corollary from the metaphysical exposition of space and time given in the 'transcendental æsthetic,' may be reached by an indirect proof based upon the antinomies, and, thus grounded, it warrants an inference to the ideality of space and time. What is conclusion in one demonstration is premise in the other, and conversely.

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[1] *Prolegomena*, § 52^b (IV, 88 (135)).

[2] III, 303 (366).

[3] III, 27.

[4] *Reflexionen*, II, 4-5.

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[1] *Prolegomena*, §52 (IV, 87 (134)).

[2] III, 356 (439).

[3] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, I, Th. II, B. I Hptst. (V, 112–113).

Whether, however, Kant reached his phenomenalism as an hypothesis to explain the antinomies, or as an inference from the ideality of space and time, is not a question of so great moment as the underlying psychological doctrine without which neither of the discoveries could possibly have been made and which, henceforth, is always closely associated with them. This is the new doctrine of the radical distinction between sense and understanding. By rationalists, sense had always been regarded as a kind of reason, differing from it only by its chaotic obscurity; and by empiricists, reason had been treated as a complex derivation from sense. Hitherto, Kant had inclined now to the one and now to the other of those views, without, however, completely identifying himself with either. The essential characteristic of his philosophical transformation in the year 1769, the characteristic which explains all other phases, is his rejection of these alternatives and his mediation between them by a recognition of sense and understanding as coördinate, but fundamentally opposed, faculties of knowledge. This was the focus through which the divergent philosophical aspirations and tendencies with which he had so long been charged, radiated in new directions and with new results. The distinction between appearances and things-in-themselves was as old as the philosophy of Plato; and the ideality of space and time had long been the common property of both empiricists and rationalists. Both had served only as a ground of lamentation for the narrowness of human knowledge. But Kant's new doctrine of the equality and opposition of sense and understanding enabled him to find in these old doctrines the condition and guarantee of that *a priori* knowledge of objects which seemed to him the chief question of philosophy. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that in his letter to Bernoulli,[1] which gives a short sketch of his development in those years, he should have mentioned as starting point the antinomies, and as goal the discovery of the radical distinction between sense and understanding. If it was the antinomies that forced him to distinguish between the phenomenal and the real world, this distinction itself depended upon a prior one between sensuous and intellectual cognition, and such a one as nobody had ever made before.

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[1] VI, 59. To the same effect is the Preface to the second edition of the *K. d. r. V.*, III, 19-21 with the three notes.

Kant's epoch-making discovery, in 1769, of the specific difference between sense and understanding, of the ideality of space and time, and of the distinction between things-in-themselves and appearances was announced in the following year through the dissertation *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis*. Historians of philosophy have generally contented themselves with a mention of those parts of the *Dissertation* which were afterwards embodied in the *Critique*, and more particularly the section on space and time. And they are right in treating the earlier work as the germ of which the later was the mature development. This is borne out both by a comparison of contents and by the statements of Kant himself.[2] But valuable as the *Dissertation* is, considered merely as the first form of a great historical system—a position in which it takes rank with the earliest manuscript of *Faust* by the discovery of which Erich Schmidt has lately convulsed the literary world—it is still more valuable when regarded as the outcome and fusion of contradictory movements of thought by whose currents Kant had hitherto been carried, though always with a strong set towards rationalism. The distinction and complete separation between the sensuous and intellectual elements of knowledge enable Kant to satisfy in part the demands of empiricism and, still more, to recover completely the possibility of *a priori* knowledge of the supersensible. The *Dissertation* is, therefore, the most dogmatical of all Kant's writings. Following immediately upon those years of wailing scepticism we have already surveyed, the new attitude and tone are surprising enough. But sudden and great as the contrast is, it is the logical result of the discovery of the respective functions of sense and understanding, coupled with the natural, and for this stage almost inevitable, assumption that as by means of the innate activity or form of sense (space) we construct the *a priori* science of mathematics, so through the innate activity or laws of thought (cause, substance, etc.) we construct, with equal validity, an *a priori* science of metaphysics. Over and above the empirical knowledge derived through the senses, there is genuine knowledge from another source: such is the recoil from empiricism. But this knowledge is not due to the identity or agreement of thought and reality, but derives from the innate laws of the mind's activity: such is the modification of rationalism. Again, the mind having both a sensuous and an intellectual function, each must have its own original forms, and from these may be worked out *a priori* the twin sciences, mathematics and metaphysics: such is Kant's addition to his present system of constructive philosophy, though the last half of it, that concerning metaphysics, was undermined by the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Both the *Dissertation* and the *Critique* agree in distinguishing between the sensuous and the intellectual elements of our knowledge; but in the later work the intellectual function is made subject to the conditions of sense, while in the earlier it remains independent of them. There, accordingly, the understanding is limited to a knowledge of things as they appear (through sense); here it is allowed to know things as they are in themselves. There space and time are forms of every object of knowledge, transforming all alike into appearances; here, beyond the sensible world which they encompass, is the intelligible world of reality, the ground and immaterial counterpart of the other. Take away the forms of perception, space and time, which come between the percipient and things, and the unveiled reality of the latter is, according to the *Dissertation*, apprehensible by the understanding alone. These two points, that thought is not dependent upon the forms of perception, and that thought directly knows things as they are, form together the rationalistic thesis of the work. They are not, however, proved. What is demonstrated is that perception *is* dependent upon the forms of space and time and does *not*, therefore, reveal things as they are. The case is the same with the corresponding sciences. Because the object of perception is an appearance, is made (in part) by the percipient who puts into it the all-embracing form of space, which is *a priori*, therefore the pure formal sensuous science of mathematics is possible. But the pure formal intellectual science of metaphysics is invested with equal dignity, though the object of thought is *not* an appearance, but a reality, and the *a priori* laws of thought do *not* constitute, but simply report it.

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[1] VIII, 650.

[2] See the second paragraph of the letter to Lambert on forwarding a copy of the *Dissertation* and the first paragraph of the letter to Herz announcing the issue of the *Critique* (VIII, 662, 710).

This general account of the leading ideas of the *Dissertation* might serve to illustrate Kant's philosophical development. But the stage in his mental history we have now reached is such an important one that it seems advisable to look more closely into details. Perhaps the most striking circumstance in the *Dissertation*, especially to a reader who remembers the synthesis made of sense and understanding in the *Critique*, is Kant's insistence upon keeping them asunder and his manifest fear of their overlapping. He reduces the entire method of a metaphysic of these faculties to a single prescript for preventing the innate principles of sensuous knowledge from passing beyond their own bounds and assailing the intellectual realm.[1] The *Dissertation* in the letter to Lambert, is charged with "determining the principles of sense, their validity and limits, to the end that they may not, as hitherto, confound our judgments on objects of pure reason."[2] It had better be named a 'propædeutic to metaphysics,' or a 'general phenomenology;' it is the science *quæ discrimen docet sensitivæ cognitionis ab intellectuali; cujus in hac nostra dissertatione specimen exhibemus.*[1] The distinction (*discrimen*) is officially made in the second section, from which in great part it has passed into the *Critique*, and may, for the present at least, be passed over. But, in addition to such familiar contrasts as form and matter, phenomena and noumena,[2] we find a new contrast between the 'logical' and the 'real' use of the understanding. But the 'real use' of the understanding designates the function of producing pure notions, which are identical with the later categories. Here, however, there is only the germ of them. They are not innate, in the narrow sense of that term; they are acquired by reflection upon mental operations, and simply express the laws originally imposed upon the action of the mind.

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[1] §24 (II, 418). See the whole of that division, pp. 417–425.

[2] VIII, 663.

That space and time are the principles of the form of the sensible world is proved by the same arguments as in the later *Critique*. To the matter of sensations, which originate with something sensible, space and time are ordering principles. Even when thus invested, they do not produce sensuous knowledge without the coöperation of the logical use of the understanding. This should have been, according to the *Critique*, the 'real use' of the understanding; but, as that has been made over to the faculty that knows things as they are, it cannot, in virtue of the separation here insisted upon, be associated with the faculty that knows things as they appear.

The principle of the form of the intelligible world suggests a retrospect rather than a prospect of Kant's development. It is interesting to find the great themes of his earlier reflections—God, space,[3] causality—all reappearing in the *Dissertation*. Causality is treated as a pure notion, and space as a pure perception. Both, strange as it may seem, are found to imply that *ens realissimum*, whose existence Kant had but recently declared indemonstrable. For, how can a plurality of substances stand in reciprocal relation—as they do in space and in causation—unless they all depend upon a single ground or cause that keeps them from falling into the manifold contingencies isolated existences are prone to? God is the principle that relates things into the unity of a world. The reciprocal causal connection of things, whereby that unity is, as a matter of fact, given to us, is not itself intelligible from the mere existence of things, as is generally supposed. Neither is the unity of the world through space and time a self-sufficient and independent unity. Space and time are pictures or shadows in the sensible world of the real bond of union in the intelligible world. If that is partly dependent upon the human percipient for its constitution, this, as a system of existent notions, is grounded and established in God. Because of this common ground for their essence, sensible things have relations to one another and fall into the harmony of a world.[1]

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[1] §8 (II, 402–3.)

[2] 'Receptivity' is there, but not 'spontaneity.'

[3] Kant's pre-critical treatment of space will be considered in connection with the critical doctrine.

These metaphysical aspects of the *Dissertation* must not be allowed to conceal its essential character as a theory of knowledge. If it deals with a problem of rational cosmology, its point of view and mode of treatment are entirely epistemological. In its results, less divergent from the rationalistic philosophy than its predecessors between 1760 and 1770, it is in spirit one with the critical philosophy, of which it is indeed the germ and inviolable promise. How its plastic thought grew into the later system will be shown in the sequel. Meantime its revolutionary character, when compared with Kant's previous development, must be emphasized. The author of the *Dreams of a Spiritualist*, who found himself forced into an empiricism as thorough as Hume's, here announces that knowledge may be given by reason as well as by sense, and by both in independence of experience. This pro-rationalistic position is based on an anti-rationalistic distinction between sense and understanding, coupled with the discovery that both contain primitive or *a priori* elements of cognition. There is no passage from the one to the other of these two different and, as it were, heterogeneous sources of knowledge. What comes from the one can never be derived from the other. Within its own sphere, each is an ultimate and supreme authority. "Space, time, and the axioms which relate to them, are, as regards empirical knowledge and all objects of the senses, perfectly real and contain the conditions of all phenomena and of empirical judgments. But if something is thought, not as an object of the senses, but by a pure and universal concept of reason as a thing or substance in general, then we should become involved in a mesh of errors if we subjected it to the forms of sense—space, time, etc."[1] In the *Critique*, eleven years later, Kant does subject reason to the conditions of sensibility, and concludes that we can never know things in themselves, but only as they appear to us through the medium of the senses. Here he jealously guards the independence of reason; and, in opposition both to his recent empirical and his future critical contention, he vindicates the capacity of reason to cognize things as they are in themselves and out of all relation to the percipient subject. What a complete metamorphosis of Kant's thought was effected by this new view of the scope of reason and its antagonism to sense, may be strikingly illustrated by the change in his attitude towards the problems of morality. In the writings of the empirical period he had followed the English moralists, especially Shaftesbury, in deriving the moral and religious sentiments from a gradual ennoblement of the sensuous impulses. And as late as the winter of 1765–1766 he announced to his students that the "essays of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Hume, though far from perfect, had gone farther than any other in the ascertainment of the first principles of all morality."[2] But so great is the breach in the continuity of Kant's empirical thought in the next three years, so complete is now his opposition of the sensuous and rational, that in the *Dissertation* he speaks with manifest contempt of "Shaftesbury *et assecla*," who incur "the blame rightly put upon Epicurus" for basing morality upon pleasure, when it can rest on nothing short of pure reason (*nisi per intellectum purum*).[3] His present view

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[1] This is an old conception which Kant here revives. In our own day it has found still abler expression in Lotze's *Metaphysic*. Kant thought it sufficiently sound to give it a place in the *Dissertation*, and his disparagement of it in the letter to Lambert (VIII, 663) should not blind us to its value as an evidence of Kant's development since writing the *Dreams of a Spiritualist*.

[1] VIII, 663.

[2] II, 319 (*Nachricht von Vorlesungen*).

[3] §9 (II, 403).

of the function of reason necessitated an entire recasting of his earlier philosophy of morals. And Kant not only felt the need of thus readjusting his thought, but resolved to set about it without delay. In sending the *Dissertation* to Lambert, he wrote (Sept. 2, 1770): "I have resolved to devote the winter to investigations into pure moral philosophy, from which all empirical principles are excluded, and so arrange and work out what may be called a metaphysic of morals."[1]

The separation of sensuous and intellectual knowledge is the characteristic note of the *Dissertation.* It was intended as an introductory discipline, "to preserve metaphysics proper from all admixture of sense."[2] And it is not surprising that theology, to whose objects Kant was so ardently devoted, should immediately have drawn advantage from his rationalistic discovery. The notions of God and spirit, which his recent empiricism had excluded as illusory, resume for him their old place as valid reports of objective fact. Reason emancipated from sense reconquers for him the suprasensible world. This is manifest enough from the *Dissertation* itself. But it is more strongly accentuated in a contemporaneous work of Kant's faithful disciple, Marcus Herz, who undoubtedly echoes the master's views. After showing that sense has only a mediate, while reason has an immediate knowledge of its objects, Herz goes on to conclude: "Since it can be demonstrated on solid grounds that neither God nor the soul is an object of sensuous knowledge, but both belong to the bar of pure reason, we cannot apply to them the subjective conditions of sensibility [space and time] and hence there is, thanks to philosophy, neither a round soul nor an aging God."[3] Kant's *Dissertation* redeems theology from the perplexities into which it had fallen in the hands of Clarke and Leibniz, of Locke and Newton. Reason gives us a God, who is neither in space nor time.

Still it must at once be added that Kant did not develop or even emphasize this aspect of his new discovery. It followed, or seemed to follow, from his fundamental distinction between sense and intellect, that as the one was the source of *a priori* mathematical knowledge, the other was the source of equally valid metaphysical knowledge. The theory of sensuous knowledge is as fully worked out in the *Dissertation* as in the *Critique*. Not so the theory of intellectual knowledge. And it was this that delayed Kant's great work till 1781. "In the year 1770," wrote Kant to Bernoulli, "I was able by certain definite marks to distinguish the sensuous part of our knowledge from the intellectual. . . . . . . But then the origin of the intellectual part made for me a new and unexpected difficulty."[1] The problem was afterwards solved in the deduction of the categories, which Kant himself regarded at once as the most difficult and most essential part of the *Critique*. And this fact should remind us, in spite of the short cuts of pragmatic historians of philosophy, how far Kant's thought had to move subsequently to the *Dissertation*, before reaching stable equilibrium in the *Critique*. The initial impulse to movement has been clearly described by Kant himself in his letter to Marcus Herz of the 21st of February, 1772, the most instructive of all those letters to his friend which give us our only glimpses of the growth of Kant's greatest work. He tells Herz he had planned a treatise on "The Limits of Sense and Reason," in two parts, one theoretical the other practical. "But," he proceeds, "as I was thinking out the theoretical part both in its entire extent and in the reciprocal relations of all the parts, I observed something essential was wanting, something which in all my long metaphysical investigation I, in common with everybody else, had neglected, something which actually contained the key to the entire secret of metaphysics, though up to this time concealed from metaphysics itself. I asked myself this question: On what ground rests the relation of that which we call a presentation (*Vorstellung*) to the object? If the presentation contains only the manner in which the subject is affected by the object, it is easy to see how it corresponds (*gemäss sei*) to the object as effect to its cause, and how this state of consciousness can present something (*etwas vorstellen*), that is, have an object. It is intel-

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[1] VIII, 662.

[2] VIII, 664.

[3] Herz, *Betrachtung aus der speculativen Weltweisheit*, pp. 27, 100. (See the work quoted in Paulsen, 123–125, and Erdmann's *Reflexionen*, II, xlv–xlvii.)

[1] VIII, 650.

ligible, therefore, that feelings or sensuous presentations (*sinnliche Vorstellungen*) have a relation to objects, and that the principles which are taken from the nature of our mind have a validity for all things in so far as they are objects of the senses. . . . . . Intellectual presentations or notions (*Intellectual-Vorstellungen*) I was contented, in the *Dissertation*, to characterize negatively merely. I said they were not mental modifications or states of consciousness superinduced by the object. But I passed over in silence the question, how it was possible without being affected by an object, to have a presentation or notion which referred to that object. I had said sensuous presentations represent things as they appear, intellectual presentations things as they are. But how then are these things given to us if not by the mode in which they affect us? And if such intellectual presentations or notions rest on the activity of the mind, whence comes their agreement with objects, which certainly are not produced by them? And the principles which reason gives us about objects, independent of all experience—how is it that we find them actually valid? . . . . . The point of obscurity in regard to reason or understanding is that we cannot explain its agreement with things."[1]

This account of the one great outstanding problem yet to be solved, is so clearly given in Kant's own words that comment seems superfluous. Yet, as the letter was formerly ignored, so it has even recently been misunderstood. And in Professor Caird's *Philosophy of Kant* the misunderstanding vitiates his conception of the entire *Critique*.[2] He supposes Kant here to ask how knowledge in general is possible, from the ordinary dualistic point of view of subject and object. And he understands Kant to reply that no knowledge is possible from this standpoint, or possible at all, unless the consciousness of self contains or manifests itself in universal conceptions, which enable us to determine our sensations in relation to a world of objects.[3] But Kant is so far from transcending the "ordinary dualism of subject and object" by this absolute idealism, that the question of realism and idealism, never at any time more than a subordinate one for him, has not up to this time occupied him at all; and when his so-called idealism did emerge in the *Critique*, it came as a consequence of his final solution of the strife between rationalism and empiricism which, as the main subject of his life-long thought, he is bringing to final quarters in this letter to Herz. Does he not say explicitly his problem is: How intellectual conceptions or notions, independent of the impressions of experience, can give us real objective knowledge? It is true he first puts the question in general terms: "On what ground rests the relation of that which we call a presentation (*Vorstellung*) to the object?" But he immediately divides the question into two parts: the reference to objects, first, of sensuous presentations, and secondly, of intellectual presentations or notions. The first part presents no difficulty to him. For sensuous presentations are mere appearances to sense, which, as effects, correspond to the things that produce them. Kant accepts this tenet of popular philosophy as a matter of course. But intellectual presentations are not thus passively received. Reason is active. Were its activity creative, as it presumably is in the divine mind, so that the thinking of objects would be at the same time the production of them, we could understand how notions might refer to objects. But ours is not such an *intellectus archetypus*. Neither is it a passive recipient. How then can rational knowledge of objects be explained? The problem is not, as has been strangely supposed: How is knowledge in general possible? For Kant, as we have seen, finds no difficulty in explaining that portion of knowledge, by far the larger portion, which we have through the medium of the senses. His perplexity begins and ends with the special inquiry: "How reason entirely *a priori* can form to itself notions of things with which these things necessarily agree, how by itself alone it can outline real principles of their possibility with which experience faithfully accords, ... Whence this agreement between reason and things?"[1]

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[1] VIII, 688–690.

[2] Caird's *Philosophy of Kant*, pp. 182–192. Similarly Windelband, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, II, 41–2, and Volkelt, *Kants Erkenntnisstheorie*, 30–35.

[3] Caird, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

The answer to this question is contained in the second part of the *Critique*, the Transcendental Analytic, and more particularly in the section headed "The Deduction of the Categories." It is the quintessence of the new work, and marks, as nothing else can, the progress of Kant's thought since the composition of the *Dissertation*. Could we retrace the steps of that advance, our sketch of the genesis of the critical philosophy would be complete.

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[1] VIII, 690.

Before making the sketch in greater detail, it may at once be premised that the whole movement issues, negatively, in the final surrender of Kant's deeply rooted doctrine that reason has power to know things in themselves, and, positively, in the new insight that whatever *a priori* knowledge reason is the source of, is restricted to the conditions of sensuous experience, or, what comes to the same thing, refers to appearances alone. Sense and reason, sundered in the *Dissertation*, are married in the *Critique;* and rational knowledge is saved by subjecting reason to the limitations of sense, or narrowing the entire realm of the knowable to the boundaries of a phenomenalism as remorseless as Hume's.

And Hume is the mediator between these two phases of the philosophic thought of Kant. This is the meaning of the well-known, though much misunderstood, passage in the introduction to the *Prolegomena:*[1] "I honestly confess, the suggestion of David Hume was the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber, and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy quite a new direction." It was a 'dogmatic slumber' which allowed him to grant to reason the power of knowing things by themselves, as he had done in the *Dissertation*. This had been a natural assumption with him before the empirical period from 1762 to 1766; and in that period itself it floated before him as an ideal, which, however, his growing experientialism forbade him hoping to realize. But with the revolutionary discoveries of 1769, the old conviction is reinstated that, just as sense acquaints us with the *mundus sensibilis*, reason reveals to us the *mundus intelligibilis*. And, but for the new difficulty concerning such rational knowledge raised in the letter to Herz, Kant might have rested content with this conclusion. But, if rational knowledge was to be retained at all, he saw in the next following years it could only be by a new and better solution of Hume's problem of causality, which, with the aid of Hume's limitation of all knowledge to sensible experience, he effected by the deduction of the categories. This is the "new direction" given to his philosophic investigations by the quickening suggestion of Hume. And the 'dogmatic slumber' from which he has been awakened must be distinguished from the 'dogmatic slumber,'[1] out of which he was startled by the antinomies in 1769. At that date he awoke to the discovery that the senses give us a knowledge of appearances only. The later awakening he received from Hume had for result a similar discovery with regard to reason, which up to this time had been suffered to inform us of things in themselves.

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[1] IV, 8 (8).

In tracing Kant's pre-critical development it was shown that his quasi-empiricism during the years 1762–66 was not, as has been generally supposed, due to the influence of Hume, but was the logical outcome of his own independent reflection. There was no place for the stimulus of Hume prior to 1769, nor did Kant's own language require us to seek an earlier date. Accordingly, Paulsen, to whom belongs the honor of first establishing the independence of Kant's empirical development, carried the date of Hume's influence forward to that year. He regards Hume's scepticism as moving Kant to opposition. And he sees in the *Dissertation* "a refutation of the Humian theory."[2] The peculiarity of this view is that it holds Kant was driven into an entirely opposite line of thought by the "suggestion of David Hume." And this in fact is enough to cast suspicion on it. For no one, who has not a theory of Kant's development to save, can read merely the introduction to the *Prolegomena* without seeing that if Kant "was far from following Hume in all his conclusions" he yet regarded himself, not as the opponent, but as the legitimate successor of Hume, and he specifically declares that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is "the carrying out of Hume's problem in its widest extent."[3] The "spark struck by Hume" did not kindle

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[1] IV, 86 (131).

[2] *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 144, 146.

[3] IV, 9 (10).

(in the *Dissertation*) a fire to consume its own source. It was a light, and the only light, that guided Kant's path in exploring the possessions of pure reason. And that problem first dawned upon him after the *Dissertation* had been published, as we know from the letter to Herz. The *Dissertation*, it is true, announced memorable discoveries. It proved that space and time were not notions but perceptions, or rather forms of perceiving, that these forms of sensibility, like the pure notions of the understanding, are absolutely independent of experience; that as *a priori* forms, purely subjective and ideal, they on the one hand turn the objects of sense-perception into mere appearances, and on the other thus make mathematics possible. All this passed unchanged into the *Critique* where it constitutes the Transcendental Æsthetic. But it was different with the remaining thesis of the *Dissertation*, that reason gives a knowledge of things in themselves. How is this possible? Kant asks sceptically in the letter to Herz. 'It is impossible' is the refrain of the *Critique*. The presupposition and result of the deduction of the categories is that notions of the understanding tell us nothing of things as they are, but refer solely to empirical objects or appearances of sense. But the deduction is the centre of gravity of the whole work. And as the *Critique* is the "carrying out of Hume's problem in its widest extent," we must look for Hume's influence at this vital point. And do we not find it in Kant's concession to empiricism, that, though notions are absolutely *a priori*, they have reference only to objects of experience, and have no validity for things in themselves? This concession, and the problem which it solves, as they form the substance of the *Critique*, are wholly wanting in the *Dissertation*, whose teaching, so far as it can be referred to on this point, is of quite an opposite complexion. But the *Critique* is the "carrying out of Hume's problem." Therefore, Hume's influence must be later than the *Dissertation*, which lacks the characteristic philosophy of the *Critique*. And, indeed, Kant tells us in precise words, that the principle which he adopted from Hume was: "Not to carry the use of reason dogmatically beyond the field of all possible experience."[1]

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[1] IV, 107–8 (166).

But it is not to be supposed that Kant sacrificed at once or without a hard struggle to this principle of Hume's, the life-long belief he had shared with the dogmatists in the knowableness of things in themselves, and the hopes he had based upon it for a rational theory of the soul. The surrender was gradual, and forced upon Kant by long reflection. In 1772 he had, independently, become aware of a problem for which as yet he has no solution. But towards the end of 1774 he wrote: "I find myself in possession of a principle which solves what has hitherto been a mystery, and at the same time brings under certain and easily applied rules the procedure of that reason which is wont to hold itself aloof from rules."[1] But, in the lectures on anthropology and metaphysics, which cannot be earlier than the winter of 1773–4, the limitation of reason is not made at all, or only in the most general and uncertain way.[2] Accordingly, the beginning of the year 1774 may be taken as the most probable date for the commencement of Hume's influence on Kant. Kant's resistance to it was stronger than the language just quoted implies. For, in another letter to Herz, dated 24th November, 1776, we have a record of protracted struggling,[3] which threatened to delay indefinitely that *Critique of Pure Reason* already promised for Easter, 1775.[4] By August, 1777, however, there was nothing more to do to the work except to improve the style, which could be done in the following winter.[5] But for one reason or another it did not appear until 1781. Writing on the first of May of that year to Marcus Herz, in forwarding a copy of the work, Kant observed: "This book contains the outcome of all the various investigations that began with the notions to which we devoted a formal disputation under the designation of *Mundus sensibilis et intelligibilis*."[6]

Thus by Kant himself the genesis of the *Critique* is referred to the *Dissertation*. And in other passages, more particularly in the introduction to the *Prolegomena*, he has described the details of the process by which, under the influence of Hume, he was carried from the one to the other. No doubt the description, as in Goethe's *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, makes the development more systematic and regularly progressive than it is likely to have appeared in a contemporaneous photograph, but that it contains the essential truth about Kant's philosophical development no one has ever ventured to doubt. Under the conviction that reason gave us a knowledge of things in themselves, he was going about with the problem: How can *a priori* notions have a reference to objects? Among these notions none had seemed so important to Kant as causality. What more natural in this receptive and suggestive state of mind than that he should bethink himself of the kindred problem of Hume, of which he had long ago read? That problem was, as Kant expresses it, "With what right reason thinks anything so constituted that, if granted, something else must necessarily be granted thereby; for this is the meaning of the concept of cause."[1] And Hume's solution was also at hand. "He demonstrated irresistibly that it was perfectly impossible for reason to think such a combination by means of concepts and *a priori*—a combination that contains necessity. We cannot at all see why, in consequence of the existence of one thing, another must necessarily exist, or how the concept of such a combination can arise *a priori*. Hence he inferred, that reason was altogether deluded by this concept, which it considered erroneously as one of its children, whereas in reality, the concept was nothing but the bastard offspring of the imagination, impregnated by experience, and so bringing certain representations under the law of association. The subjective necessity, that is the custom which so arises, is then substituted for an objective necessity from real knowledge. Hence he inferred that reason had no power to think such combinations, even generally."[2]

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[1] VIII, 695. The letter is problematically dated 1773 by Hartenstein. I have dated it 1774 on the authority of Benno Erdmann (*Reflexionen Kants zur krit. Philos.*, II, Einl. lviii–lix).

[2] Erdmann, *op. cit.* (note 115).

[3] VIII, 698.

[4] VIII, 695. For date, see note 115.

[5] VIII, 702.

[6] VIII, 710.

Kant shows unbounded admiration for Hume's acute and original thought. He disparages, somewhat unjustly, it must be added, Hume's opponents, "Reid, Oswald, Beattie, and even Priestley." And though for his own part he cannot follow Hume in all his conclusions, he holds that philosophy has to advance from Hume's "well-founded, but undeveloped thought."[1] Accordingly, Kant's problem is the problem of Hume, with this difference only, that, whereas Hume restricted his investigations to the notion of causality, Kant, grasping the difficulty in its entirety, considered all those pure notions of the understanding whereby it thinks the connection of things *a priori*.[2] Nor is the agreement between them confined to their formulation of the problem. Kant clung to his pre-critical discovery that the union of things implied in causality cannot be understood *a priori* from notions. "Hume was right," he says in a later passage of the *Prolegomena*,[3] "in his contention that we can by no means see by reason the possibility of causality, that is, of the reference of the existence of one thing to the existence of another which is necessitated by the former." And Kant adds that the same incomprehensibility attaches to our notions of substance and reciprocity. Yet Kant cannot follow Hume in making the causal connection a mere subjective association which takes on through custom the semblance of objective necessity. And he pronounces "hasty and mistaken" Hume's inference, from this special conclusion, to the general incapacity of reason to think such combinations *a priori*.[4] Again, after deducing the categories, Kant reiterates : "I am very far from holding these concepts to be derived merely from experience, and the necessity represented in them to be imaginary and a mere illusion produced in us by long habit. On the contrary, I have amply shown that they and the principles derived from them are firmly established *a priori*, or before all experience, and have their undoubted objective value, though only with regard to experience."[5]

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[1] IV, 5 (4–5).

[2] IV, 5–6 (5).

Kant accepted Hume's problem and his negative argumentation, while rejecting his empirical and subjective solution. To reach a better solution, he first endeavored to generalize Hume's problem. He "soon found that the concept of the connection of cause and effect was by no means the only one, by which the understanding thinks the connection of things *a priori*, but rather that metaphysics consists altogether of such connections."[1] His speedy success in extending Hume's problem was due to the fact that before receiving any stimulus from Hume he had already busied himself, as we know from the memorable letter to Herz, with an enumeration and classification of the *a priori* notions or categories of the understanding.[2] At that time he would ascertain their number by a division of metaphysics into all its essential branches, so that the categories should "fall into classes in accordance with (*durch*) a few principles of the understanding." But at the later period to which the autobiography of the *Prolegomena* refers, he succeeded in determining their number by "starting from a single principle."[3] This principle was the activity of the understanding in judging, and a complete table of its functions was easily got from any text-book of Aristotelian logic. That there were twelve categories which Kant "was now certain were not derived from experience, as Hume had apprehended, but sprang from pure understanding,"[4] is the second discovery along the road to the critical philosophy. And it involved Kant forthwith in a third problem—the deduction of the categories. That is to say, he had to demonstrate how these notions, which were subjective and *a priori*, were referred, and validly referred, to objective things. "This deduction," says Kant, "which seemed impossible to my acute predecessor, which had never even occurred to any one else . . . . . . was the most difficult task ever undertaken in aid of metaphysic."[5] And our preceding sketch justifies Kant's assertion: "It has cost a labor of many years to solve this problem in its whole universality."[6] The essence of the problem is to determine the true significance of the pure notions of the understanding and the condition of their use."[7] It is solved by showing that the categories or notions are functions of judging, telling us nothing about things in themselves, and devoid of all use save as applied to objects of sensible experience. "This complete (though to its originator unexpected) solution of Hume's problem preserves, therefore, to the few concepts of the understanding their *a priori* origin, ... not deriving them from experience, but it from them, a completely reversed mode of connection which never occurred to Hume. . . . . . . All synthetic principles *a priori* are nothing more than principles of possible experience and can never be referred to things in themselves, but to phenomena as objects of experience."[1]

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[1] IV, 8 (9).

[2] VI, 8, 9 (9, 10).

[3] IV, 59 (88).

[4] IV, 5–6 (5–6).

[5] IV, 59 (88).

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[1] IV, 8 (9).

[2] VIII, 690. It is odd that this passage has escaped in this connection, the indefatigable research of Benno Erdmann, especially as it verifies a conjecture he makes in his introduction to Kant's *Prolegomena*, lxxxviii.

[3] IV, 8 (9).

[4] IV, 8 (9).

[5] IV, 8 (9).

[6] IV, 25 (37).

[7] IV, 72 (109).

Thus the deduction of the categories is the complete and final answer to the question raised, in 1772, in the letter to Herz, which, as has just been shown, is Hume's question generalized. In this sense Hume may be called the 'originator' of the critical problem, which for his own part Kant independently discovered. But Hume's principle that reason cannot go beyond experience enabled Kant to solve the problem without giving up the theory of the *a priori* origin of the concepts; so that the essential advance of the *Critique* upon the *Dissertation*, namely, the limitation of reason (which Kant often describes as the main result of his entire system) is due to the direct influence of Hume. On that point the critical philosophy is a continuation of empiricism. On the question of the origin of knowledge it remains true to rationalism. The attempt to make a more radical opposition, or a more complete identification of criticism and empiricism, is not sustained by the facts, nor is it compatible with the mediatory tendencies of Kant. On the other hand, the view here taken may be corroborated from Kant's own *Reflections*: "My intention," he there writes, "is to investigate how much reason can know *a priori*, and how far its independence of instruction from the sense extends."[2] Accordingly, "the critique of pure reason is the critique of the conditions under which alone pure reason can form judgments."[3] But its result was very different from what had been expected at the beginning of the inquiry. "What was regarded at first as a doctrine of pure reason is now a discipline, that is, a castigation and rebuke of pure reason (*ihre Zucht und Animadversion*). This discipline is a limitation of the powers and tendencies of the soul to their proper limits." [1]

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[1] IV, 61 (91–2).

[2] *Reflexionen Kants zur kritischen Philosophie*, II, 32, no. 98.

[3] II, 35, no. 112.

There is, however, also a positive side to the critical solution: it vindicates *a priori* knowledge of the phenomena of sense. But "metaphysics when it goes beyond the pure principles understanding contributes to experience, has absolutely no other than a negative use both as regards nature, corporeal and spiritual, and what transcends nature." [2] Yet it is not to be supposed that this negative result is of little consequence in Kant's estimation. "When error is at once seductive and dangerous, negative knowledge and criteria of it are more important than positive." [3] These can be discovered only by deep searching. "The philosophy of ignorance is very useful, but also difficult, because it must go down to the sources of knowledge." [4]

Thus we have traced the genesis and growth in Kant's mind of this profound philosophy, which is at once agnostic and rationalistic. There still remains the more difficult task, the examination of the validity of that philosophy and its significance for the thought of to-day. This is a question of logical worth. But its solution is greatly facilitated by the insight we have gained into the psychological origin of the system.

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[1] II, 46, no. 155.

[2] II, 49, no. 165.

[3] II, 44, no. 148.

[4] II, 45, no. 151.